



Degrees Without Boundaries

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Testimony by Ed Klonoski, President, Charter Oak State College

I am Ed Klonoski, President of Charter Oak State College and I would like to submit testimony in support of Governor's Bill 6390: ***AN ACT CONCERNING ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION.***

Charter Oak State College charges out of state students higher fees than in-state students because the latter are subsidized by the block grant we receive from the General Assembly. According to the rules that now apply, we must charge in-state students whose parents are not legal immigrants the out of state rate. This creates several issues for us.

First, we must discover that the parents of our students are illegal immigrants. This is usually done through the Federal financial aid process. But only 25% of our students participate in this process, so we do not know the status of the parents of most of our students. Second, all of our students are adults, and 60% are working and living in Connecticut. To assign those of them with illegal parents out of state status, when they are the very students that the state is attempting to subsidize, is illogical and counterproductive.

From an institutional perspective, the Governor's bill would provide a welcome change to an irrational regulation.

From a personal perspective, I find the idea that the children of illegal parents, individuals who have lived, worked, and paid taxes to the state of Connecticut and who often have no idea that they are actually illegal, should be punished for the sins of their parents. And for that punishment to be the removal of their in-state status for educational purposes is particularly destructive. We have always told immigrants that if they work hard, learn, and invest in their local communities they will be participants in the American dream. Children of illegal immigrants have done those things, and yet the current regulation singles them out as non-participants in that dream. This is nothing less than the creation of a permanent underclass, the very thing that drove my grandparents to immigrate to the U.S.

Thank you.